



March 7, 2005

The Honorable Michael Castle
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Castle:

As a member of the Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI), I am writing to support your legislation, H.R. 810, in the strongest terms. The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act would expand federal support for human stem cell research.

At the Buck Institute, the majority of our stem cell research involves mice and our focus is on neurodegenerative disease. Current projects concern the potential therapeutic role of neural stem cells for the treatment of stroke, Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, and Parkinson's disease. Preliminary results in our lab show promise.

We understand first-hand the promise held by human embryonic stem cell research. This research may make it possible for those Americans crippled by Parkinson's disease and spinal cord injuries, as well as those suffering from Alzheimer's and many other debilitating diseases, to significantly improve their quality of life. Promoting the exploration of reasonable possibilities for curing and preventing disease is the responsibility not only of scientists but of the leaders of the nation.

Thank you for acknowledging the promise of continued medical discovery that embryonic stem cell research can offer. Your thoughtful legislation not only allows for broader federal funding for stem cell research, but also takes the appropriate steps to ensure the development of ethical guidelines for the future derivation of embryonic stem cell lines.

I appreciate your prominent leadership and your dedication to expanding stem cell research, which holds the potential for new cures and therapies for an array of life-altering diseases affecting millions of Americans.

Sincerely yours,

Dale E. Bredesen, M.D.
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